

NOTE ON THE BHĀṆA ŚĀRADĀTILAKA

Summary — This note is a first notice on a hitherto unpublished *bhāṇa*, the Sanskrit play *Śāradātilaka* by Śaṃkara. Only the more salient features of the drama are here presented, together with a description of the original manuscript and an anthology of selected passages.

The *Śāradātilaka* is a one-act monologue interpreted by a single actor, the *viṭa* Rasikaśekhara; as in other *bhāṇas*, the protagonist wanders through the streets of a town, Kolāhalapura, in this case, « The Town of Uproar », and pretends to meet a number of characters, with whom he has various conversations by means of the device known as *ākāśabhāṣita*, « speaking in the air ».

A feature that the *Śāradātilaka* and the most recent *bhāṇas* have in common is the complete lack of plot: the *viṭa* has no special task, strolling about at his leisure. This probably accounts for the prevalence of descriptive passages over the conversational ones, and also for the peculiar kind of erotic mood that pervades the whole composition, as Rasikaśekhara does not just take part as a helper in some friend's erotic adventures, but lives his own love stories as direct protagonist.

It is interesting to note that in this particular play a *sūtradhāra* and a dancer, Candrarekhā, precede the entrance of the *viṭa*.

At the end of the *nandī* in praise of Śiva and Pārvatī, Viṣṇu and Lakṣmī, the *sūtradhāra* introduces the play and its author, and the actress Candrarekhā performs a dance; then the protagonist comes on. After addressing some gallant verses to Candrarekhā, he describes at length the sunrise and the shrinking of the night, then he starts noticing the first people up about town: young milkmaids churning curd, and courtezans going back home after the night's work. He recalls the sounds of animals' love play in the woods, and depicts the image of a mountain that is compared, in fourteen different similes, to a proud human lover. Then he starts praising Kolāhalapura: the town is busy with the preparations for Kāma's festival, and he compares it to the various towns of the gods. Suddenly he is attracted by the noise of a large

crowd, waiting for the return of the king from a hunting party; Rasi-kaśekhara describes the curiosity of the people who climb to the highest places or stand in the street on tiptoe in order to see the king. The *viṭa* then meets his friend Vasantaśekhara, and the two young men exchange jokes. Rasikaśekhara addresses some laudatory verses to the king, and then turns his mind to the problem of women who go astray in defiance of all social conventions. Continuing his stroll, he finds himself in a garden which appears to be bathed in whiteness; this is one of the most striking images of the whole *bhāṇa*, with its surreal white light and its collection of glittering objects. Rasikaśekhara then meets a group of girls returning home after a music lesson; among them there is a girl he knows, Śṛṅgāratarāṅgiṇī, and he tries to seduce her on the spot, but manages only to obtain the promise of future enjoyments. He then meets and describes various graceful female figures, remarking with moralising irony on the prostitute's way of life; there are also some old brothel-keepers, usually the mothers of the courtezans, and the *viṭa* cannot really see how these horrible beings could generate such graceful girls. Then he finds himself in the middle of a sectarian dispute between a *jaṅgama* and a *vaiṣṇava*, and makes fun of the wretched aspect of a *piṇḍa*-eating brahmin; after a courtezan stipulates a three months *kalatrapatrikā* between the *viṭa* and her younger sister, Rasikaśekhara is attracted by the colourful dress of a woman fortune teller, and asks her to read his horoscope. From there he joins a party of friends to see a cock fight. Other people watch the performance of a snake charmer, who puts on a fight between his snake and his tamed monkey. The sun gets higher and hotter, and the *viṭa* describes the tired travellers dragging their feet across the burning sand of the road, while everybody else rests in the shade, either in the upper rooms, or in the courtyard of the fountain, or under tall *gopuras*. After this he meets his friend Anangaśekhara and makes fun of his great ability in seducing other people's wives. Particularly charming is the portrait of a young woman on the river bank, who undresses and throws herself in the water. The beginning of spring then is praised, and with it go the bitter pains of love. After describing the sufferings of passion, the *viṭa* describes a girl longing for her distant lover: her thoughts are fixed on him, and she can only have some pleasure when she dreams of her beloved. A procession of women coming from various parts of India then catches his eye: there are women from Kaṅkana, Gurjara, Maharaṣṭra, from Nepal, Pandya, Cola, Dravira women and women from Kārṇataka, a girl from Andhra and women of various religious beliefs. A number of religious men is then described and made fun of: the hypocritical yogins, the rapacious readers of the *Purāṇa*, the ascetics proud of their obscure doctrines. There follows a nice picture of a group of prostitutes looking down from the terrace of the porter, at evening, in order to recognize their lovers from afar. The *viṭa*'s friend then recalls when he jumped on the other side of a wall in order to make

love to a married woman, and recites an apology about other people's wives, and prostitutes. The *viṭa* compares some women to the various seasons of the year, then makes fun of a boisterous mercenary, *bhāṭa*, who can only think of fights and battles, and ends with the salutation to the king.

All these disconnected scenes should ideally be bound to each other by the *viṭa*'s playful talk and his witty remarks, but the *viṭa*'s humour is often heavy, and his images forced in the continuous tension to find, despite such a limited theme, a striking expression, a new way of treating a similarity. This may be due, together with the decaying of inspiration in the gender, to the strange contrast between the elaborateness of the style employed and the triviality of the episodes described, in the effort to reproduce an extremely popular «tranche de vie» through a very sophisticated medium, Sanskrit poetry.

Poets, especially when their plays had to be performed at popular festivals, were confronted with the double responsibility of satisfying a polymorphic audience: the *rasikas* who were able to enjoy the subtleties of formally refined texts, and common people, who, as a rule, did not understand Sanskrit but could enjoy the mocking mimic action of the *viṭa*, his coarse jokes and the musicality of his verses.

The *Śāradātilaka* was mentioned for the first time in 1827 by Wilson in his book «Hindu Theatre»¹; then, in 1864, it appeared in Aufrecht's «Catalogus Codicum Sanscriticorum Bibliothecae Bodleianae»², as number 302 of the Wilson Collection of manuscripts, and in 1909 was again described by Keith in the «Appendix to Volume One»³ of the same Catalogus. As Aufrecht⁴ says, Mss. Wilson 302 is a transcription in *nāgarī* characters of the palm leaf Mss. number 42 of the Mackenzie collection (Indian Office Library, London), written in *telugu* characters. Due to the extremely poor conditions of the palm leaf manuscript, which cannot even be microfilmed, the investigation was confined to Mss. Wilson 302^{4a}. This manuscript, arranged like a European book, consists of a *versus*, fifteen pages written on both sides and another *versus*. Each side contains from 25 to 30 lines. Pages are progressively numbered from 1 to 31, with the exception of a numberless page between page 14

1. H. H. WILSON, *Hindu Theatre*, London, 1827, Vol. II, pp. 384-87.

2. T. AUFRECHT, *Catalogus Codicum Sanscritorum Bibliothecae Bodleianae*, Oxford, 1864, Pars Octava, p. 146, n. 310.

3. A. B. KEITH, *Catalogue of Sanscrit Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library*, Appendix to Volume One, Oxford, 1909.

4. T. AUFRECHT, *op. cit.*, p. 386.

4a. When this note was already being printed, four more manuscripts have been found, 3 in the Library of the Oriental Institute of Mysore (Mss. n. 615, Telugu script; Mss. n. 4421, Nagari script; Mss. n. 4606, Nagari script) and one in the Library of the Royal Asiatic Society in Calcutta (Mss. I.G. 49, Devanagari script). A critical edition of the *Śāradātilaka* is now in the process of being prepared, on the 5 available manuscripts.

and page 15 (called here page 14/15) and the last versus of only four lines, also numberless (called here page 32).

The text presents the usual phonetic peculiarities of South Indian manuscripts; it shows emendations written in pencil both on the margins and in the text itself. In this transcription the peculiarities have been normalized⁵; the punctuation being often facultive, this has been corrected following the meaning, without indicating the divergencies from the text. I have omitted to indicate the previous emendations when these seemed to be obvious, while the more interesting peculiarities have been reported under the text.

The manuscript is not dated, and it has not yet been possible to establish in which period it was written; on account of its allusions to Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava sectaries, Wilson⁶ supposes that it cannot be earlier

5. Words occurring always in the same peculiar form have been normalized without pointing them out in the textual notes (some examples of the most frequent peculiarities will be given here), while words occurring in different forms throughout the manuscript have been pointed out in the notes to the text (words such as *sputa* and *sphuṭa*, for instance). The sign — indicates that a word has been interpolated, and it will be found in the textual notes. As to the emendations already present in the text, they've been accepted without mention when obvious. The punctuation has also been normalized, as the only sign used in the text, the *daṇḍa*, is often missing or misplaced. For the stage directions, usually separated from the rest by two *daṇḍas*, has been adopted the current use of putting them between brackets. List of the most frequent peculiarities (the numbers refer to page and line of Mss. Wilson 302):

- constant use of *anusvāra* for every nasal preceding consonant and for *m* in pausa (ex. **aṅgana*, P. 1 line 5, and *rūpakam //*, preceding *daṇḍa*, P. 1 line 23);
- peculiar treatment of the *sandhi* of **aḥ*, **iḥ*, **uḥ*, where the *visarga* falls or is erroneously transformed in *s* (ex. *induskandati* for *induh skandati*, P. 2 line 25; *rajassandoha* for *rajaḥsandoha*, P. 1, line 11; *nissarad* for *niḥsarad*, P. 4 line 4; **darbhah yaṣṭyā*, P. 14 line 8);
- doubling of *ya* after *r* (ex. *paryyāya*, P. 3 line 3);
- insertion of *y* after *j* (ex. *jyoṣam*, P. 1, line 3; *jiyāramārgam*, P. 6 line 16);
- reduction of *jj* to *j* (ex. *ujvala*, P. 1 line 28; *raḥva*, P. 3 line 3);
- reduction of *ddh* to *dh* (ex. **budhyā*, P. 1 line 2);
- confusion between *th* and *dh* (ex. *madhnanti* for *mathnanti*, P. 3 line 3);
- doubling of *t* and *d* after *r* (ex. *anuvarttitas*, P. 21 line 21; *varttate*, P. 21 line 21; *sauharddam*, P. 24 line 18);
- *sp* is occasionally found instead of *sph* (ex. *sputa*, P. 18 line 6);
- *tr* is often found instead of *ttr*, and there are cases in which the contrary occurs (ex. *patra* for *pattra*, P. 18 line 11; *dvitrāṇy* for *dvitrāṇy*, P. 18 line 10);
- *ch* is often found instead of *cch* (ex. *puṣpitochūna*, P. 10 line 9);
- *r* often replaces *ru* and *rū* (ex. *śṛta* for *śruta*, P. 3 line 18; *bhr̥vau* for *bhr̥vau*, P. 9 line 20). The contrary also occurs (ex. *bhr̥ṅga* for *bhr̥ṅga*, P. 1 line 4);
- there is always the inversion of *nh* for *hn* (ex. *vanhau* for *vahnau*, P. 21 line 20);
- the *avagraha* is never marked (ex. *kelikālepanīte* instead of *kelikale'panīte*, P. 1 line 1);
- frequent exchange between the three sibilants: *s*, *ś* and *ṣ* seem to be phonetically equal in sound (ex. *śyandane* instead of *syandane*, P. 22 line 22; *koṣeṇa* instead of *koṣeṇa*, P. 14 line 19).

6. H. H. WILSON, *op. cit.*, p. 386.

than the twelfth century; discovering a stylistic similarity between this work and the *Śaṃkarachetovilāsa* Aufrecht⁷, supported by Keith, supposes that both works may belong to the same author, a certain Śaṃkara son of Dikṣita Balakṛṣṇa, grandson of Dikṣita Duṇḍirāja, who wrote in the latter half of the eighteenth century.

The artistical evaluation both Wilson and Keith gave of the *Sāradātilaka* (« Except for a few such insignificant attempts, there is little wit or satire in the composition, and still less poetry, beyond which is merely mechanical. The style is highly laboured and involved, abounds with verbal jingle, and is not unfrequently encumbered with rhymes », says Wilson⁸; and Keith⁹ adds, à propos of the similarity of authorship found by Aufrecht: « This conjecture... seems very probable, for the absurd amount of attention paid in both works to the piling up of similar sounds in a line, paronomasia »), may discourage any attempt to approach this *bhāṇa*; still it seemed interesting to give an account of this little known text, as a late example of a genre whose persistence in Indian literature up to our days testifies the rigidity of tradition. In its effort to depict everyday life, it offers much useful information regarding the world of common people and of the court, of the red light quarters and of the *goṣṭhīs*, the meetings of friends with their various amusements and pastimes that constitute the real environment of the *viṭa*.

The language itself, as observed by previous scholars, is rather peculiar; there is a strong tendency to use archaic terms, rare and obscure words, long compounds, alliterations, and a remarkable variety of metres. In the following pages some examples will be given of the most characteristic passages, chosen for their themes as well as for their language.

Anthology of the *Sāradātilaka*.

1. The first four verses introduce already the general tone of the work; the invocation is at the same time religious and erotic, rich in tantric overtones. The style, as usual, is very elaborate, and redounds of poetical conventions.

jayati navadukūle kelikāle'panīte
jhaḍiti jaghanabhāge cchādite candrapādaiḥ
tad apanayanabuddhyā tatra lolāgrahaste
punar api nījanāthe smeravaktrā bhavānī // (mālinī)

7. T. AUFRECHT, *Catalogus Catalogorum*, London, 1891/1896/1903, Vol. I, p. 624.

8. H. H. WILSON, *op. cit.*, p. 386.

9. A. B. KEITH, *op. cit.*

*krīḍākopaprasāmapavinatau preyasīpādapadma-
-śrīsaṃkocakṣubhitahrdayo joṣaṃ ardhendumauliḥ
tasthau jñātvā tad api śivayā gādham ālīngyamānaḥ
sāndrānandaḥ sa bhavatu śivaḥ saṃtataṃ śreyase naḥ //*
(mandākrāntā)

*niryadrenuparamparāparimalavyālolabhṛṅgāṅganā-
-jhaṅkāraikamanoharaṃ sumāśaraṃ saṃdhāya sammohanam
karṣantīm idam aikṣavaṃ dhanur imām āpakvabimbādharām
ambām amburuhāsanādibhajanārambhām ahaṃ bhāvaye //*
(śārdūlavikrīḍita)

kiṃ ca

sindhukanyākucodārakuṇkumadravapaṇkilam

śreyase'stu nṛsiṃhasya sadayaṃ hrdayaṃ mama // (śloka)

joṣaṃ Mss.; *saṃdohanaṃ* Mss., corrected (P. 1, lines 1-7).

« Pārvatī exults, her smiling face [turned] towards her husband, whose fingers tremble at the moment of love-making, just as her new silken garment has fallen down and her buttocks are immediately covered by moon rays, because he thinks he must undress her again »¹⁰.

« While bowing low to appease her playful anger, he who carries the moon crescent on his crest stops still, his heart narrowed by the fading of the beauty of his beloved's lotus feet¹¹; then, when closely embraced by Pārvatī, who understands the reason of it, is full of bliss: may Śiva always favour our happiness ».

« I honour Ambā, whose worship is begun by Brahmā and the other gods¹², whose lips are like a just ripe *bimba* fruit, she who draws her sugar cane bow after fitting the flower of infatuation, made more beautiful by the humming of female bees excited by the fragrance continuously given off by its pollen ».

« Moreover: May the merciful heart of Viṣṇu, covered by the abundant saffron paste coming from the lofty breasts of the Ocean's daughter, favour my happiness ».

2. Next follows a very long description of Kolāhalapura, the « Town of Uproar », depicted in very long compounds that recall Baṇa's fashion.

10. Śiva carries the moon on his crest, and the light it sheds plays games to the lovers (cp. all the passages in Canto 8 of the Kumārasambhava); moreover, moon rays mistaken for clothing is a common poetical convention, like in verse 1994 of the Subhāṣitavālī, attributed to Bhāsa.

11. The pun here is the relation between — the moon on the head of Śiva who is touching Pārvatī's feet, the fact that her feet are called *pādapadma*, and that *padma* indicates the day lotus, which shuts up when touched by moon — rays — and the word *saṃkoca* that thus indicates the shutting up of the *padma*, by which their beauty (*śrī*) fades.

12. The term *amburuhāsaṇa*, could also indicate as explained by pandit Śrī Lakṣmaṇju of Srinigar, in the oral commentaries to the Tantraloka, the ritual disposition of 101 white lotuses around a stone *liṅga* erected for worship; the sound *jhaṅkara* itself could indicate a tantric mystical utterance.

Here we meet the first conspicuous example of the descriptive style that characterizes the most recent *bhāṇas*, and especially this one.

*iyam khalu viśṛīkhalavirājamānarājamārgasamsargitanisargarucira-
kanakaratharathacaranaghaṇaghaṇitaghanagatidalitavipulavipulā sa-
mudīrṇasvarṇarajaḥsamdohasindūritasindhurakamdharaśīnahastipa-
kahastasamsphālanasamsphāyadastokamastakasamudbhūtamahād-
bhutanidhvanāsādhvasakuraṅgitaturāṅgamatarāṅgaviṣamitavividha-
varūthinīsamcārasamākulā kulāyakaḷāyamānakalāpīṇikālāpasamku-
lākulācalasamunnatasaudhaśikharanīkaracāmīkarakarakalaśasahas-
ranīśṛtaprabhā paṭalamiladamalabalabhidupalakalitakāntisantānavi-
tānītā nītāntasantānītasarasīruhasāyakasaparyāsamārambhasambhā-
rasampādanasamāgatarasīkasamājasamāmbitalalanākaracalanāha-
takaṇkanaravaśaṅkitanavapaṅkajavanasamkīlitamadhukaramadhu-
rajaṇkāṛā ākāraśīkanīndītaghanamandaragīrikandaramaṇimandi-
rarucīdanaturalasādindūpalasundaravihāravitarddhikāvīharamāṇamā-
ṇavakapāṇīpallavasamullasitanakhamukhapallavitavallakīnīnāḍavino-
dītavilāsīnī līlānuvidhāyīnī kolāhalarājadhānī.*

hāsti° Mss.; *ākārāśī*° Mss. (haplography); note the rarer *ka* for *ku* (P. 1, lines 9-20).

« This is the capital city, Kolāhalapura, whose wide surface is upset by the passage of a multitude of rattling wheels of naturally shining golden chariots, on the infinitely resplendent royal highway; it is troubled by the movements of various troupes in arms, rippled by the waves of the horses that have turned into antelopes out of fear of the extraordinary uproar arising from the enormous heads of the elephants, that swell up because of the beatings of the mahouts sitting on their necks, which are dyed by a hazy mass of golden dust; it is filled with the noise of flocks of peacocks that murmur in their nests; it sheds a splendour emanating from a thousand golden pots put on a multitude of tall stuccoed towers, as high as *Kulācala* mountains; it has an uninterrupted series of decorations, made of the purest sapphires, put on its roofs; it resounds with the sweet buzzing of bees that remain pinned to the grove of fresh lotuses, frightened by the noise of bracelets that tinkle against one another on the moving hands of young women, clinging to their lovers, who are busy with the preparations for the ever repeated worship of love; it has the grace of charming women, enraptured by the sound of lutes on which bloom the tips of the nails, that glitter on the blossom-like hands of young men lingering on the terraces of palaces refulgent of their sparkling moonstones, and filled with a radiance comparable to that of the gems coming from the caves of mount Mandara, that challenges the clouds with the bulk of its peaks ».

3. Prologue and presentation of the play are entrusted to the *sūtra-dhāra*; many scholars discussed how many people did actually come on stage in a *bhāṇa*: whether the *sūtradhāra* was acted by the *viṭa*, or

whether he was represented by another; here it would seem that there are two distinct people coming on stage at different times, and moreover a dancer, Candrarekhā, is said to perform a dance before the entrance of the *viṭa*.

When the protagonist comes on, in fact, the stage direction notes: *tatra praviśati rasikaśekhara rasikaśekharaḥ*, « then enters [on stage] the prince of the connoisseurs, Rasikaśekhara ».

Through the audience and the *sūtradhāra* praising the drama as famous, the author seems to express some literary ambition. The public itself speaks a very refined language, and religious motifs of tantric resonance appear. The mention of Kāśī leads to the supposition that not only the representation, but the drama itself takes place in Kāśī, called Kolāhalapura with allusion to the bustling of its crowded streets.

atraiva nityanivāsapariśīlitanikhilavidyānavadyapāṇḍityapārāṅganānām atra bhavatām bhavatām purataḥ kim abhineyaṃ mayā sakalarasāsāranirūpakam rūpakam ? kim brūtha ? purā khalu purandarādivṛndārakavṛndavandanīyacaranāravindasyāmandakandalitānandakandasya kātyāyanīsanāthasya viśvanāthasya nirantaranivāsatayā saphalitasakalapuṇyarāśyām kāśyām śarvāṇīramanasaparyāsamarpitanamasyānām sadasyānām asmākam asau karṇarasāyanīkṛtā tatratyaiḥ kovidair udīritā nikhilasaparivāhapharisphurantī kimvadantī: śaṃkaraḥ sakalasatkavimānyaḥ sāhitīsarasaśāyavilāsaḥ śāradātilakam ujjvalaśayyākomalaṃ khalu babhāṇa sa bhāṇam. parispuranti kim vadanti Mss., corrected. (P. 1, lines 21-28).

« Which drama, capable of representing every best thing on earth, should I perform in front of you, respected Sirs, who have reached the highest peak of an irreproachable knowledge of all the sciences by your living always here? What do you say? » Once indeed this has become an elixir for the ears of us, the spectators, whose salutations are filled with devotion for the husband of Śarvāṇī, this saying that is bursting with the overflowing of all the *rasas*, proclaimed by the learned who live here, in Kāśī, in which every mass of merit attains its fruit, because of the constant presence [there] of Viśvanātha, the consort of Kātyāyanī, he for whom the lotus of the heart¹³ is quickly and abundantly put forth, whose lotus feet are to be worshipped by the multitudes of the gods whose chief is Indra: Śaṃkara, who is worthy of honour from every true poet, who delights in poetics and in beautiful poems, composed this *bhāṇa*, the *Śāradātilaka*, delightful for its brilliant style ».

13. *anāṇḍakanda*, literally « whose root is in joy », is a common tantric image that indicates the lotus of the heart, that blossoms during devotion to Siva.

The *sūtradhāra* himself then praises the play:

sa eva saḥṛdayaḥṛdayāhlādākārī suvihitaprayogānusārī sakalarasa-mādhurīdhurīṇo bhāṇaḥ.
ḥṛdayāṃhalāda- Mss. (P. 1, line 28; P. 2, line 1).

« A *bhāṇa* infused with the sweetness of all the *rasas*, and in accord with a well performed production, that can give joy to the hearts of the spectators ».

4. Descriptions are very often expressed by similes and metaphors, both in verses and in prose; they are rich in rhetorical devices, like the delicate description of sunrise, in which the predominant theme, the newly acquired redness of the sky, is treated in a plurality of ways, employing for instance the comparison expressing doubt, *saṃśayopamā*. There is a whole series of fourteen similes that likens a mountain to a young man in love, and the surprising image of a spring garden bathed in white light: there the splendour of the white tails of the yaks excels the whiteness of a collection of heterogeneous objects.

The following three verses describe dawn:

*aye prabhātam iva bhātīyaṃ śarvarī. tathā hi: (ślo°)*¹⁴
ūrīkaroti viratiṃ vitatāndhakāro
dūrīkaroti rucam indukraprasāraḥ
aṅgīkaroti rucam indradiśo'vakāśo
raṅgīkaroti gaganam ghanarāgalakṣmīḥ // (vasantatilakā)
apī ca
niryātāḥ phaṇisadmataḥ phaṇiphaṇā māṇikyamālāruco
durvāraḥ kim u purvaparvatavanīvaiśvānarāṇām gaṇaḥ
āhosvid vikaṭāṭavikarighaṭādantāgrasaṃghaṭṭataḥ
prāgurvīdharadhātudhūlir aṭha vā rāgo raver jṛmbhate? //
(śārdūlavikrīḍita)

idānīm khalu:
induh skandati mandam ambujavane jāgharti saṃvartikā
kokī śokarasam jahāti vigataśrījālakās tārakāḥ
niryatsūryamayūkhaḥpāvakaśikhā saṃghātaḥ saṃgharṣate
ramyendīvaram mandirād iva bhayān niryānti puṣpandhayāḥ //
(śārdūlavikrīḍita)

idānīm Mss.; *jāgarti* Mss. (P. 2, lines 20-27).

« The diffuse darkness comes to an end the spreading of the moon rays moves far away its radiance, the place which is the region of Indra promises light, the glowing red of the clouds reddens all the sky ».

14. Verses are not usually distinguished from prose by any graphical device, but in the first three pages sometimes the indication *ślo°* between two dandas precedes a verse.

« Moreover: The hoods of the cobras have emerged from their abode; they look like a rubies necklace; or is it an irresistible group of fires in the wood of the eastern mountain? Is it the red lead dust of the eastern mountain, thrown up by the tips of the tusks of a troop of monstrous wild elephants? Or else does the redness of the sun spread out?

And now: The moon slowly fades and the new lotus leaf slowly wakes up in the lotus grove. The female *cakravāka* abandons her sad mood, the stars lose their net of splendour. The rays of the rising sun vie with fire's clusters of flames, while the bees emerge, as if frightened, from the delightful abode of the blue lotus ».

A mountain then is compared to a lover; here a few similes are given:

taruṇāruṇakiraṇasaraṇivadadhikarudhiravarṇaparipūrṇavikaṭakāṭa-
kavanacaṭuladhātudhārādharatayā kuṅkumapaṅkāṅkita iva.
tarunarunakiranasara - Mss.

(P. 3, lines 24-26)

samunnatasālasantānasantānitasamīrasamīpasañcārasamullolakalloli-
nīniraṅkuṣaṇipātaniṣyānditanibiḍanīradaninādanīścayanitāntamudi-
tanīlakaṇṭhanivahanīrantaranīrmitanīrūpamanijapicchavikāśasamañ-
citanikhīlāsīkharatayā śikhāsamarpitaśekhara iva. pārśvadvayapra-
gatapracuragaṇḍaprakāṇḍaprasuptapratānucamarīparivṛtadarīmuk-
havinīrgatavimalapadmarāgamaṇimarīcinīrūpitapurobhāgatayā śma-
śrurekhālaṃkṛtamukhavivaraniḥsaradvīṭirasadhāra iva.

(P. 3, lines 27-29; P. 4, lines 1-4)

piṇcha - Mss.

samullasatkusumavallīvellitanitambanikurumbatayā samālbambitani-
tambinījana iva.

(P. 4, lines 4-5).

sāndrapayodharasamāśliṣṭasamastasānutayā payodharaparirambhita
iva.

(P. 4, lines 8).

samuttuṅgaśṛṅgaḥ kāmījanāḍambaram viḍambayati.
śṛgaḥ Mss.

(P. 4, lines 10-11).

« It looks like a man decorated with saffron paste: a seam of mineral ore glitters through the woods of its wide valleys, rich in a colour redder than the path of the rays of the young dawn ».

It is like a man with a diadem on his head: all its peak is pressed together by the uninterrupted display of the incomparable feather tails performed by rows of peacocks, profoundly joyful because they take

to be rumblings of thick and dripping clouds¹⁵ the roaring of the wild cataracts of the river, that winds on its course swift as the wind and goes through rows of vaulted Śāl trees.

It looks like somebody who shows through his open mouth, decorated with a line of beard, a streamlet of red betel juice: its fore-part is made conspicuous by the light of purest rubies, that appear from the opening of a cave surrounded by slender female yaks, sleeping against the trunks on its vast flanks (cheeks) that extend on both sides.

It looks like someone to whom cling beautifully buttocked women: it has many hillocks wavy with shining blossoming vines ».

« It's like one who's embraced by a breast: all its summit is enveloped by a thick cloud ».

« The summit of the lofty one seems to challenge the pride of [human] lovers ».

Description of the white garden:

*varāṅganātaraṅgitaśṛṅgārasaṅgītaraṅgadabhaṅgamṛdaṅgamaṅgalanī-
nādamukharaśikharasaudhasavidhīsaṅcaratsukumārasamīrasaṅcārī-
tapañcāyudhaviṣayavaijayantīkalitavimaladukūlasahacarahimakara-
karānikarānīrasanacaturacamaratanuruharucīnīrasitaśaradaśaśadha-
rasurakarivarapuraharagirisurapurasariduragaparivṛddhākumudasa-
mudayabhasitahasitasindhusaindhavacandracandropalavimalāṅgavi-
haṅgamṛnālanālakundakandalakambuśaradambudīṇḍīrapuṇḍarīka-
hārānīhārahīrapaṭīrakśīrasīrapāṇīnāradaśāradaṭpāradaśāradaṇīradā
sakālasugūṇakusumapeṭikā vasantavātīkā.*

Erroneously emendated as *saudhavīdhī*.

(P. 6, lines 24-30; last two lines are written on the left margin of Mss.).

« This is a basket of flowers of all the collected qualities, where autumnal clouds, mercury, the goddess Śāradā Nārada, Balarāma, milk, [white] sandal wood, diamonds, frost, pearl necklaces, white lotuses foam autumnal water, white shells [white] Kandala flowers jasmines lotus filaments whitewinged birds, moonstones the moon, salt from Sindh, laughter, ashes, a mass of full blown water lilies, river snakes the gods'town, Śiva's mountain, the splendid divine elephant, the autumnal moon are put to shame by the splendour of the hair in the tail of the yaks which can outshine a bundle of moon rays similar to the spotless cloth of the banner declaring the victory of Love that is made to move by the gentle wind that blows by the palaces whose towers echo of the auspicious sound of the drums that spreads out the love songs sung by beautiful women ».

5. The figures on which the attention of the *viṭa* mainly dwells are females. His attitude towards them is the usual, traditional one, in

15. According to tradition, peacocks feed on rain drops.

which moralism is entwined with the praise of libertine ways. The outward appearance of women is the one relevant point, and aesthetic, if not sensuous enjoyment is what they must offer; scattered here and there are also some interesting descriptions of women activities: prostitutes are the most frequent characters, and the *viṭa* depicts both young girls and old hags; there are then milkmaids churning curd, a fortune teller, etc. The *viṭa* tries to seduce a young girl on her way home from a music lesson, then reproduces the sorrow of a woman longing for her distant lover: love is always the central theme, and sometimes there are subtle psychological notations; more frequently the interest is only a superficial one: a procession of women from different parts of India is seen as a series of hair-dresses, costumes and jewels; a graceful image catches a courtesan as in a painting, in the moment she draws a *tilaka* on her forehead. In the only real consideration we find about the restrictive rules that govern a married woman's life the author maintains that however much a woman is held back by authority in her actions and whereabouts, she always manages to go astray. An interesting observation about the nature of love (an eventuality rather rare to occur in a situation of prearranged marriages) is the declaration of the *viṭa* that he would prefer as a lover somebody else's wife, rather than his own spouse, or else a paid courtesan.

Here sleepy prostitutes go back home:

pratyagrastanamaṇḍalīnakhapadapraśliṣṭacelāñcalāḥ
preyaścumbitagaṇḍabhittivilasattāmbūlamudrāñkitāḥ
kelīkhedabharālasātmacaraṇā nidrāvīleḥkṣaṇāḥ
kheḷākālpitamanmathair avayavair āyānti vārāṅganāḥ //
(śārdūlavikrīḍita)

(P. 3, lines 4-6).

« The courtezans advance; their limbs disclose passion by their shaking; their eyes roll full of sleep, their feet are slowed down by the weight of love exertions, the upper part of their cheeks kissed by lovers is sealed by a glittering betel mark; the edges of their bodices are crumpled by the nail scratchings inflicted on the curve of their young breasts ».

An old hag is then portrayed:

prasārya hastau muhuś calantī garjaty asau kāmukakālarātrih. api ca
khareṇa gardabhīm eṣā nījenāṅgena lāṅgalam
udareṇa vṛkīm kāntyā vilajjayati kajjalam // (śloka)

(P. 11, lines 3-5). *muhuruś-* Mss.

« Stretching her arms and walking with a jumping movement she rumbles deeply: to lovers she's the night of final destruction. Moreover: For her coarse voice she surpasses a female donkey, with her limbs she surpasses a plough, as for her belly she surpasses a she wolf, by her complexion she surpasses black collyrium ».

The *viṭa* then describes her graceful daughter, and asks:

tasyāḥ katham anaṅgataramaṇṇī samutpannā? (vimṛśya) pañke śaivala-
maline na jāyate kiṃ nu padminī ramyā? kiṃ ca mecakameghād
udayati saudāminī latālākṣmīḥ.

(P. 12, lines 7-9).

« How could Anaṅgataramaṇṇī be born from her? (thinking about it). Well, doesn't the lovely lotus rise in mud full of weeds? And also the beautiful streak of lightning is not it produced from a black cloud? ».

Milkmaids are also attractive, even as they work:

īṣatpārśvavisārītaikacaraanam tārakvaṇatkañkaṇam
kiṃ cid vaktritamadhyamaṇ samadhikasvedāmbuvaktrāṇilam
rajjivākaraṇalolabāhuyugalam paryāvalgatkucam
ballavyaḥ kila paśyatām iha mano mathnanti nedaṃ dadhi //
(śārdūlavikrīḍita)

(P. 3, lines 2-3). *madhnanti* Mss.

« The milkmaids churn the minds of the onlookers and not this curd; their breasts dance alternately, while their arms move pulling at the rope, their faces pant, abundantly wet from perspiration; their waists are slightly bent, their anklets tinkle shrilling, they place one foot slightly apart ».

Another woman indicates her strange profession by the peculiarity of her attire:

saṃvyānasamvītakucastanamddhayā
śīrṣe samāveśītacitrapetīkā
vakṣoruhālolavarātāmālikā
kaiśā karālambitavetrayaṣṭikā // (*lalitā*)¹⁶
jyam īkṣaṇikeva lakṣate.

(P. 14/15, lines 7-10).

« Who is that woman, who has at her breast a baby she has covered with her upper garment, with a colourful basket put on her head, a shell necklace dangling from her neck, and a bamboo cane clung to her hand? She appears to be a fortune teller ».

6. Rasikaśekhara meets a young girl, exalts her beauty and proposes himself as her lover.

kalaye kisalayam adharam śaṅke pañkeruham karadvandvaṃ manye
manasijavetraṃ gātraṃ netraikamohanam tanvyāḥ. eṣā kasya bhāge
patisyatīti? khidyati me hrdayam. (prakāśam) priye śaradī pūrvas-

16. This verse is slightly different from the current form of the *lalitā*, as the second foot is —o instead of —oo.

*miṇ kucau te likucopamau idānīm tu sarojākṣi sarojamukulāyitau.
tad asāv eva praihamakusumavikāśasamayaḥ kim artham itthaṃ
pariharasi mām rasikaśekaharam? (karāgreṇa cubukāgraṃ grhitvā
mukhaṃ unnamayya) kadhaya tāvat śayanam kadā kariṣye kucayu-
gam āliṅgya kuṅkumodāraṃ sañjātapulakajālaṃ muktāhārāṅkamu-
drayā ruciram?*

(P. 8, lines 2-8).

« I think that her lower lip is a young leaf, I wonder if her hands are lotuses, I believe her body to be Love's walking stick, most attractive to the eye. To whom is she destined? My heart breaks. (Aloud) Dear, last autumn your breasts looked like bread-fruits but now, lotus eyed one, they are like full grown lotuses. This is the moment of the blossoming of the first flower, and then why are you rejecting me, me the prince of connoisseurs? (Grasping the tip of her chin raising her head): Tell me, when shall I sleep with you after embracing your breasts full of saffron, which have a net of raised hair shining with the curved sign of your pearl necklace? ».

7. A scene of love in separation is then depicted:

*cakṣur dvāranirīkṣaṇe karasarojāne kapolasthaḥ
tvadvārtāśravaṇe śrūtiś tava sukhaprāptaṃ tadiyaṃ manaḥ
vahnau ca svayam āṅgaḥ tanulatānālīkaśayyā tale
prāṇās tvayānuvartitās tad adhunā vyasteva sā vartate //*
(śārdūlavikrīḍita)

api ca:

*lolākṣi śayane nimīliyanayane mithyā bhavantam muhuḥ
svairaṃ cumbati nandati pratipadam gādham samāśliṣyati
cātūni sphuṭam ādareṇa kurute hāsyam rahasyocitam
prāpnoty āṅga tavāṅgasāṅgavirahāt
svapne'nubhuṅkte sukham //*
(śārdūlavikrīḍita)

(P. 21, lines 19-24).

« Her eye is stuck to the door, her cheek rests in the hollow of her lotus hand, her hearing is concentrated in hearing news of you, her mind is fixed on securing the happiness of your company, her slender body rests in a bed of lotuses which to her is the fire of love itself, and her life rests just in you, so she is now as if she were split into many pieces.

Moreover: The girl with rolling eyes, while laying on her bed with her eyes shut, imagines she is kissing you passionately, that she is merged in pleasure, and that she is embracing you closely. She's intent on speaking sweet flattering words, she smiles in a way which is only appropriate in private: truly, since she lacks your embrace, sir, she enjoys it in her dreams ».

8. Regional costumes: the Nepālī woman¹⁷.

sakhe syandanavandanāya sakaladeśebhyaḥ samāgatavatyaḥ sudatyāḥ paśya paśya.
*venījitamadhupālīvainī mṛganābhisurabhikucapālī, ninditanavaśaśi-
 pālikelītilakena bhāti nepālī. dīyātām ito dṛṣṭiḥ kamanīyatārahārā
 candanaparihasitacārūṇhārā.*

(P. 22, line 22; P. 23, lines 1-3).

« My friend, look there: beautiful women from all regions, come here in order to pay homage to the chariot.

By the surface of her breasts scented with musk she's like a black antelope; [black] bees are made like nothing by [the blackness of] her hair; the Nepalese girl shines for a *tilaka* that puts to shame the new moon ».

Another *tilaka* is praised:

*tilakam mukhanālike madhupam madhulolupam śaṅke samkocara-
 hitau pakṣau lolekṣaṇe bhrūvau (śimantasantānitām muktālatām
 avalokya) śtrojaśimni śimante dhatte muktālatām asau tamovṛndair
 navīnendurekhām bandhīkṛtām iva.*

(P. 9, lines 19-22).

« I wonder if the *tilaka* on the lotus of your face is a bee fond of honey, whose expanded wings are your eyebrows, o unsteady-eyed one¹⁸ (looking at the string of pearls on the parting of her hair). She has a string of pearls on her hair-parting, as if a ray of light from the new moon were imprisoned by thick darkness ».

9. Are women unfaithful because of or despite their seclusion?

*śatadhā khaṇḍite'pi śarīre kā vā jahāti jārā jāramārgam. tathā hi:
 baddhā sarvaiḥ śvaśurakulajair ujñhitāpi svabhartrā ruddhā pitrā-
 dibhir api sadā niñḍitā bandhuvargaiḥ kiṃ cij jñātā rucir api sakṛj
 jāramārge yadi syāt kā vā loke tyajati ca punar jīvite nirgate'pi?
 tad etādṛśīnām avicāra eva varāḥ.*
cijñāta - Mss.

(P. 6, lines 16-20).

« Which adulterous woman, even if her body were cut into a hundred pieces would abandon the path of [being] a lover? Because, even if restrained by the whole family of the father in law, even [knowing that she would be] abandoned by her husband, even if held back by her father and her relations, and always criticized by the entire group

17. WILSON, *op. cit.*, p. 84-85, gives a list of these women.

18. The *tilaka* in the center of her forehead resembles the body of a large bee, its wings being her eyes.

of her friends, once she has known a little pleasure on the path of [being] a lover, which of them would abandon it even if she comes to the end of her days? So not to think about these women is in itself preferable.

An opposite view, or the other facet of this situation, is expressed in the *viṭa*'s appreciation of love for another's wife or for prostitutes.

yataḥ:

*kṛtakṛtaḥ svadāreṣu veśyāyām vikrayārjitah
snehaḥ sa eva hi snehaḥ sarvatrānyakalatrake // (śloka)
(vihasya) kiṃ bravīṣi? tarhi mithyānurāgam eva na ghaṭayanti kiṃ
vāravadhūtya iti? kim āścaryam?*

*veśyājanasya sauhārdam uccaistvaṃ ca payomucām
mahībhujaṃ ādaraṇaṃ jalabudbudasannibham // (śloka)*

(P. 24, lines 16-19).

« For men, whether they have a wife or not, the love they obtain sold by courtezans is real love; and similarly, the love they make to the wife of someone else is in any case real love ».

What do you say with a laugh? Don't the courtezans make a show of false love? What is strange there?

The affection of a courtesan, the height of clouds, the favour [shown] by kings are just like a water bubble ».

10. An interesting feature of popular festivities are their various public entertainments. Beside the military parades and the processions of women, the favourite pastimes are animal fights, always present in the meetings of friends, the *ghoṣṭis*.

Here a cockfight is described:

*ayi pārśvataḥ śrūyate ko'yaṃ kalakalah? śṛṅgāratarāṅgiṇī prāṅgaṇe
pravartate raṇaś caraṇāyudhayor iti. tarhi tadavalokanāya sādhayāmi.
imau hi:*

*dūrād āgatyā vegāt samanataśirasāv āyatīkṛtya kaṇṭham
tuṇḍāgrākṛṣṭatuṇḍau kṣurakalitapadair mūrdhni tīkṣṇaṃ vidārya
anyonyatroṭīdaṣṭasphuṭataraninadagrīvam uccair bhramantau
utplutyotplutya śaśvatpraharaṇam adhikaṃ yudhyatas tāmracūḍau //
(sragdharā)*

ajñi Mss.; *pārśvata* Mss.; *sputa*- Mss.

(P. 18, lines 2-7).

From this side there is a great noise. What is it? There is a cockfight in the courtyard of Śṛṅgāratarāṅgiṇī. Then I'll go and see it. Those two, then: Moving in from afar with great speed, and stretching their necks, with wild beaks they try to slash the head of each other with

their feet armed with razor blades, and, while their throats scream higher and higher, they soar high in the air, and, incessantly jumping up, fight an ever more violent battle ».

Another performance is offered by a snake charmer:

*dhṛtvā dvitrāṇy upari sirasaḥ kekipattrāṇi citraṃ vallībaddhaṃ
kaṭakam aparāṃ kāmavamaṃ ca pragaṇḍe karnāntaḥsprgjaṭilakuṭilai-
kāṅgulibhūtipuṇḍro vyālagrāhī viśati phaṇikīśapāśena sākam. ayam
ahigrahaṇeṣv atīśauṇḍaḥ khalv āhituṇḍikaḥ. yataḥ:*

*sarpasya darpāpanayasvatantraṃ
mantraṃ samuccārya vidārya dharṣam // (indravajrā)
mahoragendrasya khagendragītair
bhavaty atandraḥ sutarāṃ narendraḥ // (upendravajrā)
śānte svānte narendro gurum iha kalayan kiṃ cid uddhṛtya peṭim
aṅgulyāsphālya paścād anibhṛtam asakṛt pūrayan phūṭkṛteṇa
hastenākṛṣya cakṣuḥśravasam atha samuttuṅgitasvottamāṅgaṃ
paśyan mustyā svajānum calayati śanakair nāgavādyena gāyan //*
(sragdharā)

*citraṃ khalu viśamukhavalīmukhayor itaretaraceṣṭāvyatikaraḥ. hanti
phaṇena phaṇīśo daśati ca daśanaiḥ śanaiḥ śanaiḥ kīśaḥ vimukhaṃ
mudritadṛṣṭir muṣṭau dhṛtvā bhujaṅgam uccalati. udgirann uragā-
dhīśaḥ svagalāt garalānilaṃ manuṣyapreṣyatām dhatte caturaś ca
turānanaḥ. strīṇāṃ api sādharmaṇaṃ bhujaṅgavaśīkaraṇaṃ kiṃ
punaḥ puruṣānām. karnāntaḥ Mss.; vyālagrāhī Mss.; viphaṇī- Mss.;
dharyam Mss.; preṣatām Mss.*

(P. 18, lines 10-22).

« Wearing on his head two or three peacock's feathers, with a bracelet made of a bright coloured vine tied to his wrist, and another one made of shells on the upper part of his arm and a sectarian mark of ashes large a finger breadth which is thick and curved, and reaching down to his ears a snake charmer, with his snake and the rope of his monkey enters the market place. This snake charmer is certainly great in catching snakes; so: By uttering the spell that serves to remove the pride of snakes, he breaks down the courage¹⁹ of that king of snakes. By singing the incantation of Garuḍa, that king of charms becomes completely free from worry. With his heart at peace, thinking about his master, that lord of charms having lifted slightly the basket, stimulates it then with his finger, and by repeatedly and audibly blowing some air [into the basket], pulls out the snake with one hand, and looking at it with its expanded hood, claps his knee with his hand, and alternately sings his *nagavādyā* flute.

19. The text has *dharyam*, that has to be emended; if it were to be *dhāryam*, meaning « to be carried », and then « basket », one could translate it as « having opened the basket »; here, according to the suggestion of Prof. Della Casa, it has been emended as *dharṣam*, « courage ».

How extraordinary, then is the reciprocal behaviour of the monkey and the snake seen side by side. The snake strikes the monkey with his hood, the monkey does so with his teeth; shutting his eyes and averting his face, after having grasped the snake in his fist it jumps away. Though he emits from his neck a poisonous breath, this great snake becomes a tamed servant of man. O how great is Brahmā. Taming snakes (or, young gallants)²⁰ is a common thing even for women, how much more for men ».

11. A common theme of *bhāṇas* is the mockery of religious people: these are seen as hypocritical beings, who make a living of fooling common people. A ludicrous quarrel between a *jaṅgama* and a *vaiṣṇava*, induced Wilson²¹ to propose an approximate date for the composition of the play. A *piṇḍa-eater*²² brahmin from Colamaṇḍala (Coromandel) is then made fun of for his repulsive appearance. Yogins, ascetics and *purāṇa* readers are mocked for their pretentiousness. As in older *bhāṇas* the real target of the *viṭa*'s sarcasm is not religion, but its faultive ministers.

In the quarrel between the *jaṅgama* and the *viṣṇudāsa* the *viṭa* doesn't know who is the worse:

*sapādukāsaktapado galocchaladbhavaprasaṅgo bhasitāṅgarāgaḥ
karāmbuje karpāram ādadhāno jaṭādhāro jaṅgama eṣa yāti. itaś ca
kāṁ cit peṭim kakṣadeṣe dadhāno dīrghair uccair ūrdhvapunḍrair
vṛtāṅgo bhāsvatghaṇṭībarhibarhāṅkacāpaś carmoṣṇīṣaḥ ko'py asau
viṣṇudāsaḥ. (vihasya) ko'yam anayor vyavahāraḥ? (jaṅgamah) rere
viṣṇudāsa bhavatpeṭikāvarāṭikāmātrakreyatvād aprayojaka iveti.
(dāsaḥ) rere jaṅgama varāka bhavatkarpāram api svalpakreyatvād
atyantāprayojakam eveti. jaṅgamaharidāsayor gauravam agauravam
ca vahnāv eva jñāyata iti. ————— ubhayor antarikṣotkṣepanenaiva
garimāvagamyata iti.*

urdhva- Mss.; *jaṅgama*^a Mss., followed by a *danḍa* and then by *dāsayor*: the copist has understood the dialogue between the two rakes to continue, while here, on the contrary, it is the *viṭa* who makes his own considerations about them; so *jaṅgamaharidāsayor* is to be taken as a compounded dual word; at line 14 the same mistake goes on: the sign ————— indicates that the copist has interpolated a *dāsaḥ* between two *danḍas*, taking it to be a stage direction: but according to Dr. San-

20. The pun here, as already observed by Wilson, *op. cit.*, p. 386, is on the word *bhujāṅga*, that designates both a snake and a gallant.

21. WILSON, *op. cit.*, p. 386.

22. Brahmins were often invited to attend cerimonial offerings dedicated to the ancestors, at which they were supposed to eat part of the offered *piṇḍas*. But they usually only pretended to do so (food given in that way was not pure enough for them), and therefore Brahmāṇḍabhaṭṭa, whose passion for eating *piṇḍa* was reproached even by his wife, reveals himself as a very low kind of priest.

jukta Gupta of Utrecht, this was not in the original, as it is still the *viṭa* who speaks.

(P. 10, lines 8-14).

« Wearing sandals on his feet, and with a casket of the Siva-*liṅga* dangling from his neck, his body bedecked with ashes, holding a bowl in the lotus of the hand, with matted locks, along comes a *jaṅgama*. And here comes this *viṣṇudāsa*, who holds a certain basket under his armpit, his body abundantly covered with long vertical sectarian marks, who carries a shining bell, and an arched head dress set on a strap of skin (laughing). How will they behave with each other? ».

(The *jaṅgama*) « Listen, *viṣṇudāsa*, your basket is useless, it could be purchased even for one cowrie ».

(The *dāsa*) « Ha ha, base *jaṅgama*, it seems to me that also your bowl is completely worthless, because it could be purchased for very little ».

« Respectability or non-respectability of the *jaṅgama* and of the slave of Hari can only be recognized in fire; one can understand who's the better of them only if they are thrown up into the air »²³.

Then it is the turn of the brahmin astrologer Brahmāṇḍabhaṭṭa: *ahahaḥ. saundaryam agrajanmanah. viprah ko'sau varātasphuṭaradanīcayah kāśanikāśakeśo godhau granther nirodhāt sakuṭīlatīlakah kakṣanīkṣiptadarbho yaṣṭyā sākam dvipādah prāsīthilavasanaḥ puṣpītocchūnanetraḥ kūsmāṇḍoddaṇḍamuśkah pīṭakavṛtavapur yāti pañcāṅgahastah. ayaṁ khalu samāgataś colamaṇḍalataḥ piṇḍabhakṣaṇapracāṇḍo brahmāṇḍabhaṭṭah. darbhaḥ* Mss.

(P. 14, lines 6-11).

« Ha ha ha! [Look at] the beauty of the brahmin! Who is this priest who has a collection of teeth protruding like little shells, hair looking like [white] reed, a sectarian mark disfigured because of the impediment made by a knot on his forehead, and a bunch of sacrificial grass under his armpit? With the aid of the staff he walks on his two legs, he wears a loosened garment, his eyes are swollen up with spots, his scrotum is swollen up like a pumpkin, his body is covered with pustules; he's approaching, with an almanach in his hand. There has certainly arrived Brahmāṇḍabhaṭṭa from Coromandel, who is great in eating *piṇḍa* ».

And again:

*pādena sūryapūtrāya cakṣusā bhṛḡgusūnave
brahmāṇḍāyāṇḍakoṣeṇa brahmāṇḍāya namo namaḥ // (śloka)
koṣeṇa* Mss.

23. This means that only ordeal through fire or through throwing them into the air could decide who's the better of them.

(P. 14, lines 17-19).

« Homage to Brahmaṇḍa, who in his leg is like the son of Sūrya²⁴ in his eye resembles the son of Bhṛgu²⁵, and in his scrotum looks like the cosmic egg »²⁶.

Ascetics of different beliefs are also mocked:

*paryāyagrathitākṣasūtragaṇanāparyākulāḥ śmaśrulāḥ
sāndrībhūtavibhūtipūtavapuṣaḥ kāṣāyavastravṛtāḥ
kākṣālambitapīṭikā grīvalasatkṛṣṇājīnā yogino
gacchanty atra janaikamohanakarā dambhāsu mūrtā iva //*
(śārdūlavikrīḍita)

vastrā- Mss.; *gravi-* Mss.; *kraṣṇā-* Mss.

(P. 23, lines 15-18).

« Here come the bearded yogins, intent on counting one after another the beads woven in rosaries; their bodies are smeared with thick layers of ashes, they're wrapped in garments dyed in ochra, and have skins of black antelope protruding from the cloth-bags hanging under their armpits; they only want to deceive people, as embodiments of hypocrisy ».

Yatis are also mocked:

*kaṣāyasārāruṇavastrakhaṇḍāḥ
kaupīnasaṃveṣitavenudāṇḍāḥ
viññānavisraṃsadasadvitaṇḍā
vīthau samāyānti yati pracāṇḍāḥ //* (*upajāti*)

(P. 23, lines 20-22).

« With their tattered clothes red with saffron dye, their bamboo sticks wrapped with strips of cloth, with their captious cavils [that drop in front of reason] impressive ascetics advance in the street ».

12. The language, very elaborate in poetry and in prose, is especially complex in some passages, such as the description of Kolāhalapura and that of the white garden, abounding in long compounds and alliterations; these seem to be the *alaṃkāras* preferred throughout the whole composition, as well as the recurrence of rhymes and similes. Onomatopoeic sounds are also frequently employed, as well as sounds apt to describe certain situations (like the softening of speech by the use of nasal sounds in erotic passages). The three examples that follow present a succession of onomatopoeic sounds, a series of nasal sounds that

24. Sūrya's son Śani (Saturn).

25. The son of Bhṛgu is the planet Venus (Śukra), who was once made blind by a blade of grass, the same term designates also a morbid affection of the iris.

26. There is a pun here referring both to the name of the brahmin and to the illness of his scrotum that likens him to the enormous cosmic egg.

sweeten the description of animal love-making, and an interesting lexical parallel between the names of certain animals and the names of the weapons employed for killing them:

*taṅkāraḥ smarakārmukasya vikasatkāntārakāntiśriyo
jhaṅkāraḥ karakaṅkanasya vilasadvāsantaviṇāravah
humkāraḥ smarasaṅgare vijayino 'naṅgasya śaṅkhasvano
hīmkaro ratināyakasya sa vane bhr̥ṅgīravo 'sau śrutah //*
(*śārdūlavikrīḍita*)

(P. 3, lines 15-18).

« Te twang *taṁ* of the bow of Smara has the grace of the beauty of the forest in bloom; the jingling *jhaṁ* of the bracelets has the sound of the shining spring's lute; *huṁ* the sound of Kāma, who is victorious in the battle of love has the sound of the conch; the sound *hīṁ* of the god of love is the buzzing of bees which is heard in the woods ».

Love is expressed by nasal sounds:

*bhr̥ṅgītaraṅgīkṛtanādarāṅgī sārāṅgasāṅgena vanāntaraṅge
anaṅganārācaniṣaṅgitāṅgī śṛṅgāram aṅgīkurute kuraṅgī //* (*upajāti*)

(P. 3, lines 18-19).

« On the stage of the forest the female antelope, intoxicated with the buzzing produced by restless bees, her body transfixed by Kāma's arrows, joins in love play the male antelope ».

The translation of next verse cannot reproduce at all the interesting paralleled alliterations of the original:

*bhallūkā bhallasaṅcinnāḥ śārdūlā dardurāhatāḥ
khaḍgāḥ khaḍgair nikṛntāḥ syur mahiṣāś ca maheṣubhiḥ //* (*śloka*)
saṁchināḥ Mss.; *dardurā*-should indicate a type of weapon, but its meaning in the dictionaries seems to be « frog » and « flute »; in lexicons it means also « cloud », « sound of a drum », « kind of rice », « name of a mountain », « name of a man », etc., here « sound of a drum » is probably the best choice.

(P. 6, lines 22-23).

(« Bears were killed with spear heads, tigers were repelled by drums, rhinoceros were slaughtered with sabres, buffaloes sent down with long arrows »).

* * *

The purpose of this short anthology was to give a general picture of this *bhāṇa*; its structure aimed at reproducing, through the proportional relationship intercurring between dialogues and descriptive parts, the structure of the *Śāradātilaka* itself, with some examples of the variety of situations that can occur even in a limited and rigid frame such as the one set in its immutable form by tradition. The passages

between scene and scene, though, show the monotony of the pattern: the stage-directions usually employed are *puro'valokya* and *padāntaraṃ gatvā*, after which a description and an eventual dialogue can take place. A few examples show the usual rhetorical devices of *ākāśabhāṣita*: *kim bravīṣi* starts the conversation, *iti* ends it. The most current lexical peculiarities and some of the difficulties of interpretation have also been shown, as well as the most elaborate verses and prose passages.